

*Yesterday's  
Past Visions of the*

*Tomorrow's  
American Future*



*Organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition  
Service and the National Museum of American History*

*Sponsored by Champion International Corporation*

**Yesterday's Tomorrows**

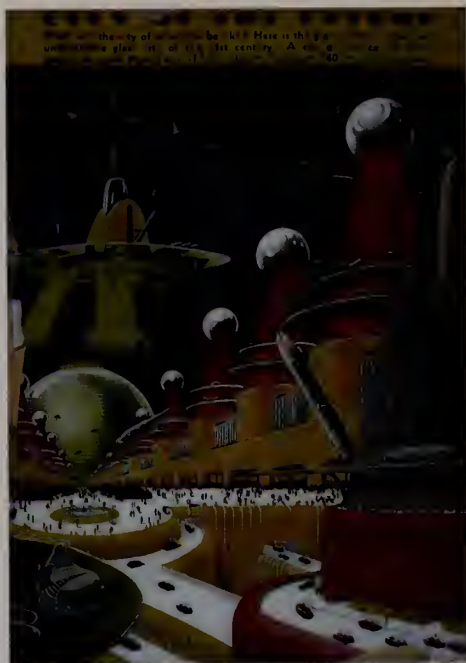
What does the future hold? For each of us? For all of us? Earlier generations of Americans were as fascinated with the promises and threats of the future as we are today.

Yesterday's Tomorrows uncovers these past expectations of America's future in images and objects that were once considered to be the "things to come." They provide a vivid record of escapist fantasies, confident projections, optimistic hopes — the imprint of a culture. Whimsical or serious, these visions of the world of tomorrow reveal a singular faith in progress and a fascination with technological discovery.

**Finding the Future**

"The Future" does not exist except as an act of the human imagination. The media through which Americans "find" the future are thus as important as the images and ideas that they convey. The literate world first glimpsed the future in fiction — the fantastic adventures of Jules Verne, the utopian epics of Edward Bellamy, and the complex

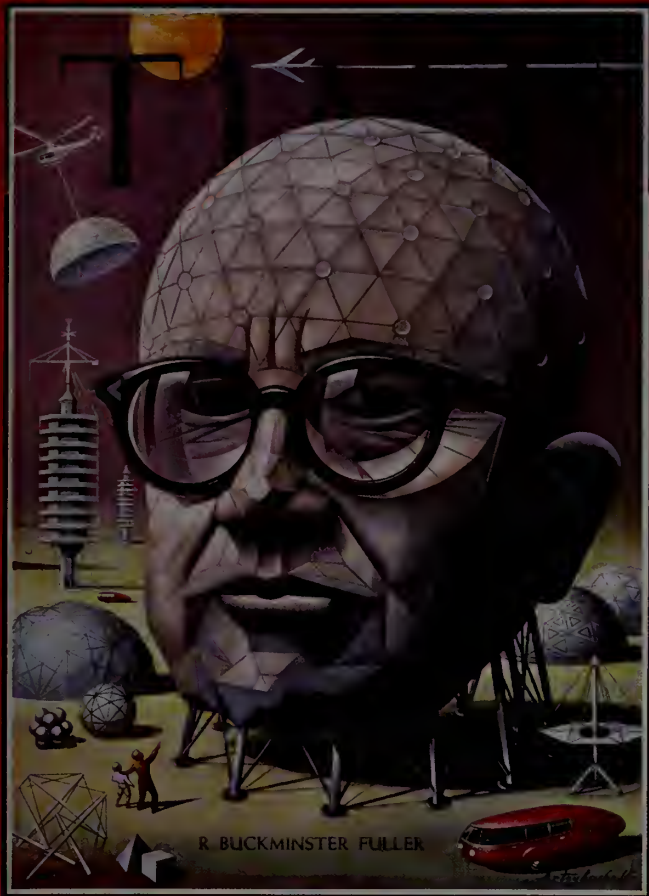
novels of H.G. Wells. By the 1920s, a new genre — science fiction — had been born, filled with predictions of an exciting, if dangerous, future with exotic locales and amazing machines. The future was also splashed across the colorful covers of popular science and hobby magazines. More than anywhere else, Americans of the 20th century found the future in the arena of popular culture.



Frank R. Paul, "City of the Future," *Amazing Stories*, April 1942

**Future Communities**

Few images of the future are as complete as those of future communities. Often the scale is global, the purpose utopian, and the effect uplifting. Architects such as Hugh Ferriss rendered the definitive jazz age image of the cosmopolis in America's future, crowded with skyscrapers and dirigibles.



R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER

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**At the end of the Depression, "Futurama," the 1939 New York World's Fair pavilion designed for General Motors, transported visitors to the amazing world of 1960. More recently the future community has assumed the proportions of a "mega-structure" — a mile-high skyscraper, a climate-controlled dome, a colossal space colony.**

the magazine cover October 1964. Portrait of R. Buckminster Fuller. Artist: Boris Artzybasheff



# MARS ATTACKS THE WORLD

LARRY BUSTER  
CRABBE

JEAN ROGERS CHARLES MIDDLETON  
FRANK SHANNON BEATRICE ROBERTS



## The Future on Film

Futuristic visions have filled the silver screen since movies first began. The flickering, moving, and later, talking images — with their power to transport audiences to unimagined realms — have had an enormous influence on the

way we have seen the future. The mood of the future on film is constantly shifting with the mood of the day — the 1930s heroism and escapism of Flash Gordon, anxiety about visits from aliens, monsters, and Communists in the Cold War years, back to recent heroic fun in the galaxies, with Star Wars and Star Trek, or to bleakness and violence with Blade Runner. Whatever the prediction, the future on film is uniquely persuasive and alive.



Images of the "home of the future" reflect Americans' changing notions about the domestic ideal. While predictions about tomorrow's



housing reveal shifts in technology and taste, they are surprisingly void of social change. For much of this century the dream has focused on turning the home into a perfectly engineered assembly line product. Buckminster Fuller's glass and aluminum "Dymaxion House" of 1927, stripped of decorative details and filled with labor-saving devices, promised families of the future more leisure time and space for creative expression. Glamorous "homes of tomorrow" became staple items at world's fairs and department stores in the 1930s and 40s. After the austerity of the homefront during World War II, the "kitchen of tomorrow" — complete with built-in waffle irons and remote control vacuums — became central to consumers' dreams of prosperity. By the 1950s, promises of miracle materials and unlimited energy from the atom fueled fantasies about tomorrow's homes.

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Why should a forest products company like Champion sponsor an exhibition about how people in the past envisioned their future? Although most speculation (past and present) about the future tends toward the technological, our interest lies more closely with the natural sciences. Our products — paper, packaging and building products — all come from trees. The growing cycles of the trees we plant and harvest are constant reminders of time past and time future. Thinking about the future is an act of fundamental optimism. And paying attention to what the past thought the future would be reminds us that tomorrow is not so much pre-ordained as it is there for us to shape.

Andrew C. Sigler  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
Champion International Corporation  
Stamford, Connecticut

**The exhibition will travel to:**  
**National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.; Chicago Museum of Science and Industry; Willamette Science and Technology Center, Eugene, Oregon; California Museum of Science and Industry, Los Angeles; Oakland Museum, California; Museum of Science, Boston; Whitney Museum of American Art, Stamford, Connecticut.**

**Yesterday's Tomorrows by Joseph J. Corn and Brian Horrigan, published by Summit Books and SITES, contains 64 full-color illustrations and 136 black-and-white illustrations and 176 pages, and is available in the museum shops and bookstores. Paper: \$17.50, cloth: \$29.95. Posters, postcards, and replicas are also available.**



"Mile High Skyscraper," Frank Lloyd Wright, 1956. Artist: Julian Allen, 1981.

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Champion Javelin® Coated Offset/60 lb.

## Advertising the Future

Since the turn of the century, the optimism of the future has been used to promote products. Advertisements imply that the future is happening now, that customers should catch up with it. To do so, they just need "the toaster of the future," or "a Ford in their future." Such ads encourage the popular notion that the future is purchasable, technologically superior, and truly fantastic. Buying the future guarantees a better life for the consumer. More recently, the future in advertising is identified not with goods but with a clarity of vision and a concern for efficient planning.



There are some marvelous benefits ahead for mankind. But along with every benefit will come a whole new set of problems.

Champion is a forward-looking forest products company. We plant seeds for a living. Seeds that take up to 50 years to become mature trees. Therefore, we think a lot about the future of the forest. And, of the people who will be around to buy our products in the years to come. So, during the coming year, in magazine ads like this, we will be discussing some of the potential cultural and sociological impact of future technology and change on our generation, and the generations to come—in help you make intelligent choices. You might say, we're planting seeds of thought for tomorrow.

## The Future is coming. Are you ready?

In 1926 the man whose invention ultimately led to the development of the TV tube said:

"commercially and financially I consider television an impossibility, a development of which we need waste little time dreaming."

And in 1945, a famous American naval officer said, "That is the biggest fool thing we've ever done—the atomic bomb will never go off, and I speak as an expert on explosives."

And in 1948, a respected science magazine said, "Landing and moving around the moon offers so many serious problems for human beings that it may take science another two hundred years to lick them."

Obviously, no matter what you may hear to the contrary, the future is coming. And soon.

And with it will come incredible change in our lives and in the lives of our children and grandchildren. This ever-expanding future, with its vast and incredible technological innovation raises some perplexing questions that are important to address now, so as to avoid what futurist author Alvin Toffler calls "future shock."

As a company whose entire being is based

on the tree, a renewable resource that takes from 25 to 50 years to mature, we have always been particularly concerned about the prospects of future generations of forests and of future generations of people. It is a sobering thought that not many of us in the company will be alive when the forests we are preparing for the future right now are ready for harvesting.

To state it simply, as one of our top executives said recently in a speech, "Out of enlightened self-interest, Champion is a company with its roots planted firmly in the future."

So it seems only natural for us to raise some of the problems and opportunities that futurists foresee for the coming generations. And to discuss some of the choices that will have to be made.

In the future, in magazine pages like this, we will be looking at issues like Access to Life Extension, the Social Implications of Changing Family Patterns, the Effects of Over-Crowding, Communications and Culture in the Future, Social Values and Market Economics, Environmental Planning and Resource Allocation, Growth and Alternatives to Growth, and other issues that will impact the generations to come.

And as futurists foresee new problems, we will bring them to those pages too.

If you believe that the world of tomorrow should not be left to chance, and for a free copy of a brochure about the critical issues we face in the future and a bibliography for further reading, write:

Champion International Corporation,  
Box 200, Stamford, Connecticut 06921

Champion, a forest products company with its roots planted firmly in the future. We are in the forest products business. We plant trees and harvest them. We make wood and paper. And we make things out of wood and paper. Because we make our living from the forest, our business naturally, in this way, is rooted in the future. There are our questions, about the future, about the future of the forest.

CHAMPION PAPER PRODUCTS  
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**Champion**  
Planting seeds for the future



*Playing with the Future*

*More than other expressions of popular culture, toys most clearly identify the future with make-believe. Most futuristic toys derive from characters in the media — the first such toy ever marketed was the Buck Rogers*



*Rocket Pistol XZ-31. Since then, space heroes have continued to inspire playthings ranging from Halloween costumes to lunch boxes to toy weapons. Children's assumptions about the future — romantic combinations of violence and fantasy — are still molded by the media's version of tomorrow.*

# MODERN MECHANICS AND INVENT



*Weapons and Warfare of Tomorrow*

Ultimate weapons were first envisioned in pulp and hobby magazines. Young readers were amused by violent adventures with amphibious submarines and flying tanks. Only after World War II did such visions parallel official military projections of future wars. The boundary between popular culture and military experimentation has become increasingly indistinct. As early as 1901, H.G. Wells predicted a devastating bomb powered by nuclear fission, a

vision that became reality in 1945. The fantastic rocket belts and jet backpacks of Buck Rogers and James Bond have found their way into the hardware plans of aerospace corporations and the U.S. Army. Introduced to the world in the annals of science fiction, "death rays" now promise to remove future encounters with the enemy to a laser-filled space frontier.

"Flying Biplane Tank," Modern Mechanics, July 1932

*Tomorrow's Transportation*

Our movement through time into the future has often been symbolized by visions of tomorrow's transportation. In the 1930s, the automobile industry made futuristic styling a familiar sight and the "car of the future" every consumer's dream. Glamorous model cars and provocative images forecast a dynamic future of streamlined shapes,

nuclear-powered engines, and flying machines. Past prophecies have promised that future cities will be criss-crossed with mono-rails, people movers, and magnetic trains. From our fascination with flight, air-cars and flying wings, personal helicopters and flying saucers have emerged.

Outer space, and the vehicles that will take us there, now command the attention of visionaries and governments alike.

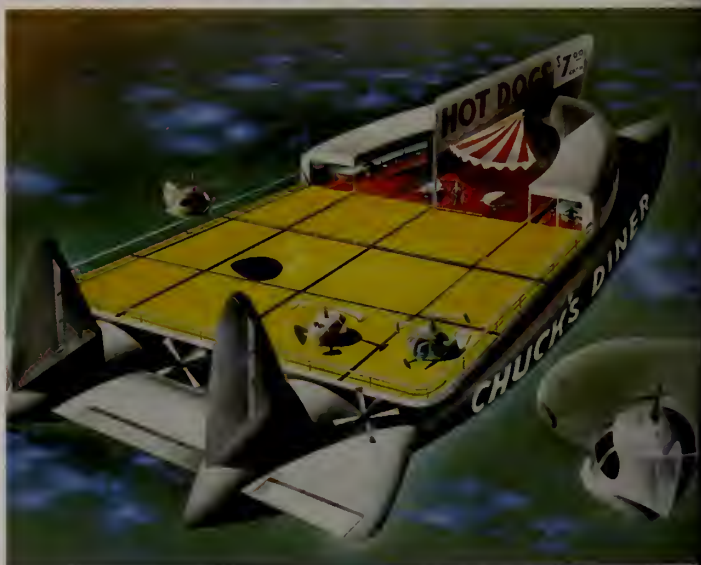


Arthur Radebaugh, "Chuck's Diner," ca. 1945

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